

Review: SemiDisk I

BY WILLIAM ENGLANDER
Contributor

The use of semiconductor memory to supplement disk storage is catching on, especially when buyers realize the kind of speed improvements they can obtain with the devices. SemiDisk I from SemiDisk Systems of Beaverton, Oregon, is an excellent example of such a device, and it has the added benefit of working on a large variety of microcomputers.

When you buy SemiDisk I, you get a board containing the semiconductor memory and related circuitry, a diskette containing supporting software and a manual. You plug the SemiDisk I board into your S-100 bus computer, IBM PC or TRS-80 Model II; put the diskette provided in your B: drive and type B:SemiDisk. You will then have an extremely fast E: drive with 256K ($\frac{1}{4}$ megabyte), $\frac{1}{2}$ megabyte or 1 megabyte of semiconductor storage, depending on which size SemiDisk I you bought. We tested the $\frac{1}{2}$ megabyte, S-100 version of SemiDisk I.

The SemiDisk I fits inside your computer and has no moving parts. It is fully compatible with the CP/M operating system, allows you to assign any drive name to it and gives you faster access than diskettes or even hard disks. Its power requirements are low, and it provides memory retention after your system is turned off, unlike other such devices, which must be backed up before power can be shut off. It employs parity checking of data and optional read-after-write checking.

You can assign the SemiDisk I as any drive (including A:). If you give it the name of an existing drive, the other drive designations are changed to the next sequential names.

SemiDisk I gave us faster access than a hard disk. You can get as much as 8 megabytes of semiconductor disk storage per system by using the 1M version and multiple boards.

Release 5.00 of the SemiDisk I driver program contains a program called SemiSpool that sets aside a portion of the SemiDisk I unit to function as a print spooler. You can send a file you wish printed to that area and continue working; the material will be printed while you work.

When you are used to a slow floppy-

disk-based system, SemiDisk I's performance is dazzling by comparison. The time required to copy and verify a file using CP/M's PIP command dropped from 1 minute 20 seconds on a floppy-disk system to six seconds with SemiDisk I. Compiling a CBASIC program took three seconds, as opposed to the 27 seconds required with floppy storage. If you designate the SemiDisk I as drive A: and place a copy of the operating system on it, you will be able

to start your system from that drive, improving speed greatly.

SemiDisk I in all respects behaves just as any other disk would. You can store all your system and data files on it and do your work much more quickly. Later, you can copy files that have been moved back to their respective diskettes, giving you backup abilities.

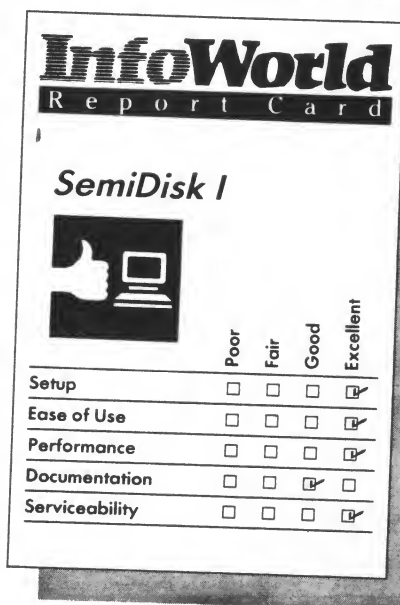
The SemiDisk I driver program takes up about 750 bytes of memory and changes information so that the system operates properly. You may find nonetheless that other programs that perform the same type of modifications will create problems because they require the same memory. For example, Digital Research's Despool program is one (though SemiDisk I's speed makes use of that particular program unnecessary). It is probably a good idea, though, to check whether or not a program requires the same area of memory as the SemiDisk I driver in order to avoid problems.

SemiDisk I also has a Help capability. If you need assistance when installing the software for the unit or in configuring it for proper operation, you can ask for help. The software will display on the screen three pages of available options; you can also ask for the current option settings for comparison.

The SemiDisk I board is simple to use. It requires you to use four contiguous ports, so it is easy to use as an adjunct to the main memory as well as a disk substitute. If you intend to use it as an extension of main memory, it is a simple matter to set it up so as to allow you to read and write information in any location.

The easiest way to use SemiDisk I is to use the software that comes with it and emulate a disk drive. It would be better if the software permitted you to treat different parts of the unit as different drives, since this would let you use the device in the manner to which you are accustomed with floppies. Though that would be handy, it is by no means necessary.

The manual that comes with SemiDisk I is understandable and easy to read. The introduction suggests parts of the manual for the casual user and other parts for the systems programmer who wants to "write his own drivers." For the casual user, the relatively few hardware options are well documented, and you don't need to be



Summary: SemiDisk I is one of the best semiconductor disks we have seen. It has the advantage of retaining its contents even when the power is shut off, so there is no need for constant entering and copying of information as there is with other units. It fits inside the machine, comes with simple-to-use software and gives you very fast access to your information.

Product details: List price, 256K version \$895; 512K version \$1095; 1M version \$1795. Available for S-100-based or TRS-80 Models II and 12 with CP/M 2.2 or later; IBM PC under PC-DOS 1.1. Includes battery backup. Manufactured by SemiDisk Systems Inc., P.O. Box GG, Beaverton, OR 97075; (503) 642-3100.

HARDWARE

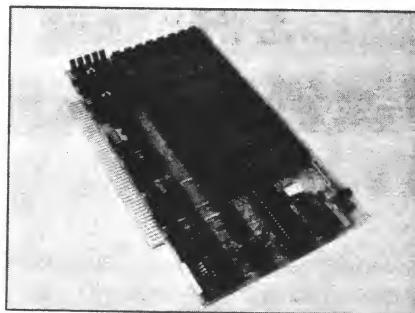
handy with a soldering iron if you want to use them.

The software options are also well documented. The manual emphasizes backup; in fact, it demands that you "make at least two copies of the release disk and lock the original and one copy away from dust, dirt, coffee, nearby bar magnets and other anti-social elements."

For the programmer who wants to customize the SemiDisk I or integrate it into the computer's BIOS, the information provided is excellent. The well-documented source programs for all the provided software are included on the diskette. (They do require that you have a macro assembler.)

Even the Theory of Operation section for the SemiDisk I board was understandable — a first! It was so clear that we were able to write a simple BASIC program to store and retrieve an array directly on the SemiDisk I (not using the SemiDisk I software) in a few minutes.

SemiDisk I has a one-year warranty, which is considerably longer than the typical warranty encountered when purchasing such devices. In addition, the manual contains an excellent troubleshooting guide. Given the looseness of the S-100 "standard," this is particularly important. The SemiDisk I manual says,



SEMI-DISK SYSTEMS

SemiDisk I fits inside your computer.

"SemiDisk Systems is just a phone call away." When we called with some questions, we received prompt, courteous answers.

If the system should fail, you must ship your board (prepaid) to the manufacturer, and it will fix or replace it in one day under normal circumstances. SemiDisk Systems provides a test program so you can thoroughly test your SemiDisk I yourself. The company even provides a parts list so you can easily order replacement parts if you have the hardware background necessary to maintain your own board. The schematic diagram is omitted, however, which could be an inconvenience if you are doing your own maintenance.

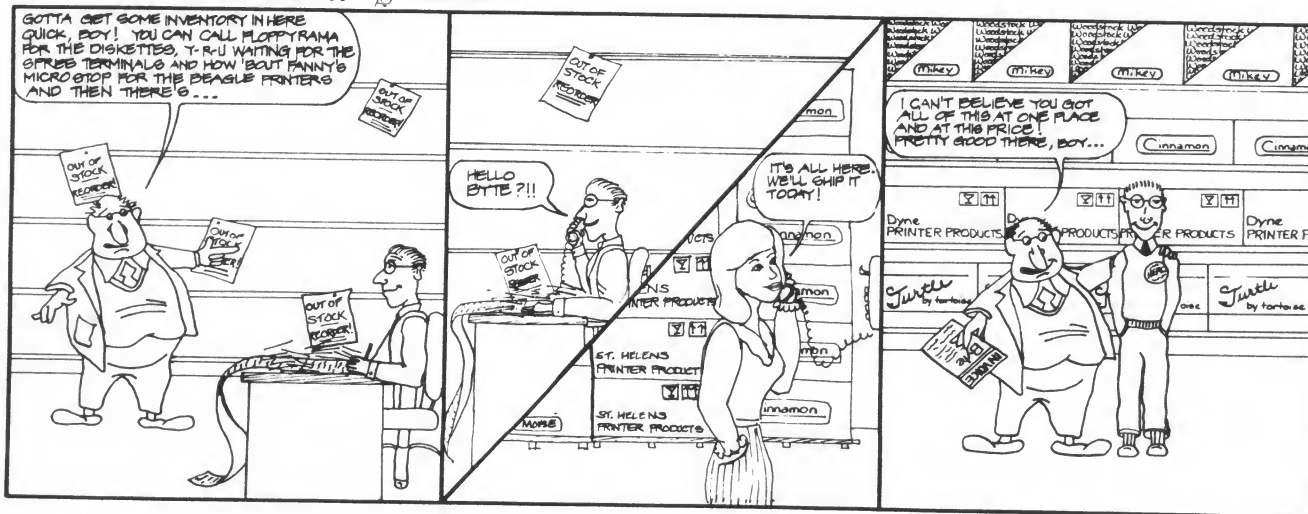
If you have an S-100 computer, an IBM

PC or a TRS-80 Model II, you can normally unplug your system, install your card, plug in, put a copy of the disk provided in your B: drive, enter B:SemiDisk I and be all set. We consider that an easy setup. The S-100 version of SemiDisk I, as shipped, occupies ports 80H-83H. If you are already using those ports, you can easily change the needs of the board by altering some switch settings. You can specify the new address as an option the first time you run the software or simply wait for it to ask you, "Where's my board?" In either case, the program will reconfigure itself so that it will remember the board address thereafter.

There are other switches and jumper cables on the board that enable you to use multiple SemiDisk I's simultaneously. They are well documented and would not normally need to be changed.

SemiDisk I is especially well suited to applications that require a lot of disk space and use the disk frequently, such as those that involve manipulating large spreadsheets or documents. If you do a lot of this kind of work and want to do it faster, we recommend you use this product. It is fast, well built, easy to use and might be the very thing you have been looking for.

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SOFTWARE

perform a potentially destructive action in which you must delete data, such as close out a particular month, HomeRecord asks you to confirm the action before you take the final step.

HomeRecord's documentation is a brief 15 pages, with no table of contents or index. This document is merely an introduction to the program. It includes a conceptual overview, information on installation and hints on how to get the maximum benefit from the product, partic-

ularly when used in conjunction with the companion HomeTax. You don't need much more — the on-line guidance is good enough to answer most of your questions.

The only aspect of this product that is not explained clearly in the documentation is the month-closing process. It is not obvious that you are restricted to working with one month at a time when entering income and expense data.

The installation instructions assume that you are using a system with two

floppy disks. It is not obvious how to adapt these instructions to a hard-disk system. (To do so you must split important HomeRecord files across the logical drives A and B.)

HomeRecord is a quality program. It has limitations, but can be useful if your finances aren't too complex. When used in conjunction with HomeTax (an excellent personal-tax package) it can help you effectively manage your personal finances. And the programs are tax deductible! ●

Review: I Am the C-64

BY PHILLIP ROBINSON
Contributor

If you are a beginner or novice who owns a Commodore 64 and find action on the screen easier to follow than on the page, I Am the C-64 is the program to show you the workings of your machine. At your own pace, in large and colorful graphics, it will demonstrate the capabilities of the machine and give many

explanations and a few more hints about harnessing those capabilities.

I am the C-64 is actually two programs. The Introductory Series consists of Volumes 1, 2 and 3 and is all on one diskette. These volumes are Overall Introduction to the C-64, Introduction to the Keyboard and Introduction to BASIC, respectively. Although the volumes can be run in any order you wish, the numbering is a good road map. The ideas become more

advanced in each consecutive volume.

All of the volumes are built around screens. Each screen presents a single scene or explanation and occupies the entire display. Some screens are altered during your use of the program, and you can't stop a screen once you have started to use it. Once a screen is played out, however, you can use a function key to return to the previous screen.

Volume 1 is a fun introduction to the sprites and sounds of the C-64. It is short and sweet.

Volume 2, the Introduction to the Keyboard, is excellent. A diagram on the screen highlights each key as its function and use is explained.

Volume 3, Introduction to BASIC, does

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a good job of covering the fundamentals. Short programs are run by a mysterious character on the screen who is supposed to be the obedient spirit of your computer. This volume could easily be expanded and deserves a diskette all by itself. This program within a program surprises us by how well it illustrates program action.

Volumes 4, 5 and 6 are on the second diskette called I am the C-64, Advanced Series. They are Advanced BASIC Techniques, Sprite Graphics and Music and Sound Effects.

Volume 4 is a continuation of the material in Volume 3, but it covers more complicated instructions and structures of the BASIC programming language.

Volume 5 shows off some of the powers of sprites, which are graphic objects you can display and move about on the screen. It is not complete, though; it skips descriptions of some of the things you can do with sprites. Volume 5 demonstrates how to build a sprite, how to detect "collisions" between two sprites when moving them around on the screen and how to move sprites over each other.

The possibilities you can encounter by creating more than eight sprites through the use of more advanced techniques, as well as some other useful tidbits, are also left out.

Volume 6 illustrates how Commodore 64's built-in sound-generating chip works in much the same way that Volume 5 does for the sprites. It describes the major functions of the chip that you can control. It describes the Attack, Sustain, Release and Decay functions of the chip and includes some sample tunes to illustrate the functions previously described. The discussion of some of the more subtle effects you can create by using things such as the filters are not covered, though.

The documentation for I am the C-64 is practically nonexistent. The back of the box tells you how to start using the program, but that's it. Thankfully, each volume is self-documenting because it is meant as a guided tour of a particular area. But some documentation for the product is not too much to ask. A list of the screens or subjects in each volume, a chart of the color codes, a chart of the screen memory locations or sprite-building tables are just a few of the additions that would enhance these programs. You can use the programs without such information, but the \$29.95 price should allow the publisher enough profit to include some documentation of tangible value.

There is some documentation on the screen — Volume 3 has an index at the end, and Volume 5 has an index at the beginning. The indices list the screens in the volume and allow direct movement to any screen. We wish there had been an index at the beginning of each volume.

The lack of them is inconsistent and unnecessary.

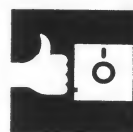
Fortunately, despite the weakness of the documentation, the product's error handling is completely satisfactory. We didn't have any problems, even though we attempted to hand the program as many errors as we could.

The publisher, Creative Software, provides a limited warranty on the package. For ninety days after purchase, it will replace the diskette free of charge if there is a defect in the medium.

Both the Introductory and Advanced series of programs are very easy to use. They do an excellent job of demonstrating the fundamentals of the Commodore 64 and BASIC programming on the machine. We wish the programs were a bit longer and accompanied by some supporting charts or tables. For the price, though, I Am the C-64 provides the wary novice with a comfortable introduction to one of the more popular home computers. ●

InfoWorld Report Card

I Am the C-64



	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Performance	☐	☐	☒	☐
Documentation	☐	☒	☐	☐
Ease of Use	☐	☐	☒	☐
Error Handling	☐	☐	☐	☒

Summary: I Am the C-64 is a pair of programs designed to take the novice Commodore 64 owner through the fundamentals of using the machine and elementary BASIC programming. It is easy to use and error-proof, although the documentation is barely adequate. The material covered could also be a bit more extensive, though for the price it is a good buy.

Product details: List price, \$29.95 for each diskette. Available for Commodore 64. Requires one disk drive; color TV or RGB monitor. Published by Creative Software, 230 East Caribbean Drive, Sunnyvale, CA 94089; (408) 745-1655.

we could get nothing but green text with white status information on a black background. PeachCalc's main column header comes up in white, with the rest in green. Having used the programs in living color, we are a bit disappointed with common old green. We even tried to set the screen to an approximation of amber under the control of MS-DOS, but PeachText came up green anyway.

On the other hand, you will find the system very forgiving of your errors. Nothing we could do short of shutting off the computer seemed to disturb the operation of PeachText 5000. Incorrect selections from the master menu are simply ignored. We could not cause List Manager to fail, though you'll find it easy to make a muddle of a file in the process of reformatting it by adding or deleting fields. The procedure is a clever one, and List Manager does try to keep you straight, but you have to pay attention to what you are doing. The rest of the software package is similarly well protected from its users. Each program comes with a full complement of error messages, all of which, though brief, are reasonably clear. The reference manual provides detailed explanations.

The reference manual is one of three spiral-bound manuals that, along with two reference cards, a sheet of "Quick Start Instructions" and a "Special Note for Owners of Eagle Computers" comprise PeachText 5000 documentation. The reference cards are actually fold-out brochures listing all of the commands and functions of the software and showing typical display screens.

The ATI Training Power manual is strictly a guide to the ATI tutorials, doing

little more than repeating in print what you will see on the screen. This is useful, but it's not likely that you will refer to this manual once you've gone through the course.

The "Lesson Plan" is Peachtree's own tutorial manual, which is not only keyed to a set of lessons included on the PeachText 5000 disks but is also chock full of detailed explanatory information and self-training exercises.

Peachtree seems to have spared little expense in the production of the manuals. Printing, binding and illustrations are all publishing-house quality. They handle well and, contrary to the earlier versions, are indexed — important in lengthy, detailed documentation of this sort.

Peachtree has developed The Peachtree Support Plan, an automatic, no-cost, 90-day telephone-consultation service and an optional, extra-cost, extended-service program. The \$96 fee for the extended-service plan covers the entire PeachText 5000 package. The fee for a single module is \$75.

Although it lacks the cohesion of a truly integrated package, at \$395 PeachText 5000 is a mighty powerful collection of goodies. Considering the range of facilities native to the system, it represents one of the best dollar values on the market. The Report Card designations for PeachText 5000 represent our estimation of the quality of the overall system, even though we would rate some of the individual packages a little more harshly. The executive menu is a simple but powerful solution to organizing a diversity of programs. We definitely recommend PeachText 5000 to the "personal productivity system" bargain hunter. ●

Review: Gutenberg Jr

BY MARTY PETERSEN
Contributor

Few of the many word-processing programs on the market are capable of helping you get the best-looking results from your printer. Gutenberg and its Jr version (which is the subject of this review) are unique in that they address the subject of making printing look good, to the best ability of the printer you use. The appearance of printed material created with this program is superb.

On the other hand, this is a bear of a product to learn because there are so many commands that do not have logical

names and are not adequately documented. If you really want fancy printing and are willing to put up with a certain amount of aggravation to get it, this is a terrific product. If you want the same quality in ten minutes, pass this one by.

The version we reviewed is specific for the Apple Dot Matrix Printer. There are other versions available, including one for the Epson MX-80, though if the printer cannot perform certain functions, no program can help you really jazz up your document. The Apple printer has those functions and indeed is capable of much better print quality than you normally get from its own character sets. Gutenberg Jr

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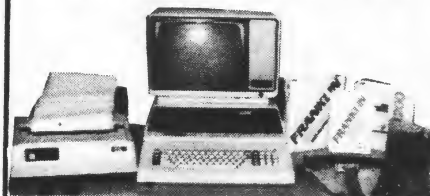
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SOFTWARE

sets up several of its own fonts, including bold and italic, which include the necessary accented characters to mix French, Spanish, German, Italian and English. You can also create your own characters such as graphic symbols and double-height letters.

Gutenberg Jr has a "paint" program that allows you to create true portraits with the fine detail possible only when you are able to work with every dot the printer can produce. Gutenberg Jr allows you to store such portraits in files and later insert them into text.

In any complicated word processor, you can't avoid coding, and Gutenberg is no exception. It's how you code that's different here. You don't, for instance, type .lm 10 for a left margin of line 10, or .ce to center the next line. With Gutenberg you code "cafeteria style" — it reminds us of going to a hash house and ordering dinner by numbers. You use preset routines (called macros) that format the whole text.

For instance, <M1> gives you a single column, double-spaced draft with a page number centered at the bottom. If you call <M3>, you get a double column, single-spaced format suitable for a story or newsletter. There are 13 of these supermacro commands, but you can modify them as desired for unlimited variety. You have control over the kind of header, kind of footer, amount of line spacing for paragraphs and the number of columns on a page.

A beneficial by-product of the automatic-formatting method is the centering of titles. Often when you center a line of text with a word processor and later change the print style from normal to expanded or compressed, the title is no longer centered and you have to readjust the margins. With Gutenberg you never have to adjust margins or even set them in the first place. If you call for a line of text to be centered, it will be centered no matter what type size or style or number of columns you are using. If the line of text is too long to be centered, the computer will divide the line into as many shorter ones as needed and center each.

There are a whole series of paragraph macros that allow such selections as indentation, blocked paragraphs (where one or both margins are pulled in) and automatically numbered paragraphs using three levels of indentation. You can freely add or delete such paragraphs, and the program will automatically get the numbers right. Justification with this package allows you to justify the left and/or right margins or center all the text in the paragraph.

One of Gutenberg's features is particularly useful when you want to create a table of contents or an index; it permits you to specify two pieces of information,

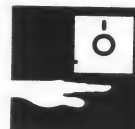
one for each margin, and place a dot leader between them. You can also do the same thing, but without the dot leader, using another command.

There are, of course, some differences between the Jr version and the original Sr version reviewed earlier (Vol. 4, No. 26). One is price — Jr costs only \$89, and Sr is priced at \$315. For the smaller price you do get fewer abilities. Jr uses predesigned macros but does not let you create macros, as does Sr. Also, Jr supplies two character fonts, bold and italic; Sr allows you to create high-quality proportional character fonts of your own. Jr lacks provisions for global translation of files among Apple DOS and CP/M, provisions for modem communications, programmed editing and data-capturing capabilities.

The exceptional performance of Guten-

InfoWorld Report Card

Gutenberg Jr



	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Performance	☐	☐	☒	☐
Documentation	☐	☒	☐	☐
Ease of Use	☐	☒	☐	☐
Error Handling	☐	☐	☒	☐

Summary: Gutenberg Jr is a scaled-down version of its parent, Gutenberg Sr. It is a word processor that really shines in the way it allows you to print documents — you can produce truly attractive work on a dot-matrix printer. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to use, with numerous commands to learn and a lack of sufficient information in the documentation. Using it is a trade-off between time and quality of printed material, so consider carefully.

Product details: List price, \$89.95. Available for Apple II Plus or IIe under DOS 3.3. Requires 64K RAM; one or two disk drives; supported printer. Published by Micromation Limited, 1 Yorkdale Road, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6A 3A1; (416) 781-6675.

berg Jr is evident when you print out the manual on your own printer. You watch as Gutenberg's logo (a bust of Gutenberg in intricate detail) is printed. You watch as double-height titling appears, along with special characters, boxed letters and other type styles. Even in this era of high technology, such a seemingly mundane experience is exciting to behold, because it's coming from *your* printer.

Looks, however, can be deceiving. Micromation Limited is probably quite proud of its beautiful manual. Unfortunately, the content leaves much to be desired. Part of the problem is that since there are so many illogically named codes, the program is difficult to use. For instance, there is a high-resolution and a low-resolution mode, but their codes are not *H* and *L* but *I* and *O*. What kind of memory aid can you devise to help you remember that <X2> means a header that is underlined, and <X3> represents a header that isn't? How can you remember that <C6> means header or footer titling aligned left, and <C7> means align to the right?

The authors of the manual have failed in several important aspects. They have not provided an overall flow chart or reference card that itemizes, in alphabetical order, every coding symbol used. They have not provided an index. In trying to learn how to use the program, you have to list the programs that produce the manual. On the title page listing, for instance, you find the code <SB2>. No place in the manual can you find out what <SB2> means. What you will find is infuriating — a statement in the manual that reads, "Gutenberg has over 115 print commands. Only 36 commands are listed here. To obtain a full list of commands you will have to purchase Gutenberg Sr."

The program also has other ease-of-use problems. When you first start to use the program, you are greeted with the message, "answer yes or no if you have the following printer interface." Then you have to type a *Y* or an *N* as you step through each entry in a list, all the while hoping that your interface card will show up next. When you finally answer "Y," you must identify the slot number the card occupies and tell the computer if you want to bypass the tutorial or not. This type of questionnaire is tedious even for the initial set-up, but absolutely should be bypassed after you have done it once.

Gutenberg Jr is definitely not a program for the casual user. But if you are willing to devote the time to master it, you will feel like the King of the Hill. The performance is great when you can get it to do what you want. You should decide if the effort you're going to have to put into learning to operate the program is worth the superb results you can achieve. ●

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Review: HomeRecord

BY STEVE MANN
Contributor

HomeRecord, from Learning Source, is a home-finance program that can store your budget and actual financial information and then generate a series of reports and projections to help you understand and control your household finances. This product can also pass summary data directly to HomeTax, an individual tax-preparation program, offered by the same firm. HomeRecord, which runs on any CP/M 2.2-based microcomputer with at least two disk drives, is a good (but limited) program for storing, tracking and analyzing personal financial data.

HomeRecord has five basic features. It lets you:

- change predefined categories and all budget amounts,
- enter income and expense transactions,
- view or print reports,
- close a single month,
- project data for HomeTax.

HomeRecord utilizes a list of income and expense categories, similar to a business chart of financial accounts, to perform its various functions. There are approximately 80 predefined HomeRecord categories, and you can define up to 20 additional titles. You can transfer categories defined as taxable income — wages, dividends, alimony, for example — and tax-deductible expenses — medical, charitable, business expenses and so on — to HomeTax. This permits you to investigate the tax consequences of various financial decisions.

Learning Source has assigned code numbers for the various categories. You must supply the category number before entering any income or expense data. Unfortunately, HomeRecord offers no on-screen list of the category titles and numbers. We had to keep a printed list close at hand, which was an inconvenience. This type of interactive program should have such information available on the screen, since it is so crucial and often used.

Each financial transaction consists of a five-character indicator, a category number, the date and an amount. You can use the indicator field to hold a check number or any other abbreviation of your choosing, but you have no way of recording any

descriptive information concerning the data you are entering. Without these descriptions, your monthly transaction reports are only moderately useful. The absence of this facility can add to your aggravation and anxiety during an IRS audit.

This program allows you to store one year's budget data and one month's income and expense transactions for each category. You have to enter the detailed data for a complete month and then "close it out." The program only retains summary income and expense information; if you

want to retain details for any closed month you will have to print a detailed transaction report before closing.

At any time you can project annual income and expenses and print a series of summary reports, or you can transfer the projections to HomeTax for examination. There are three projection algorithms:

- project annual results based on the current year-to-date actual amounts,
- add the current year-to-date actual amounts with the current month projected to the end of the year,
- add the current year-to-date actual amounts and the budget amounts for months not yet closed.

You can also print and view reports of your design — budget versus actual amounts for one month, a report for the year-to-date or a report for all twelve months for one category, for example.

You can transfer actual or projected amounts from HomeRecord to Learning Source's HomeTax program. The transfer mechanism is flawless but limited, mostly because all user-defined categories get lumped into miscellaneous income or deductions for HomeTax.

Any serious financial-management program should include some facility for cash-flow analysis; HomeRecord does not, which limits its usefulness.

HomeRecord uses extensive screen prompts and on-line help facilities to quickly guide you through the various data-entry and report-generation options. The screens are clear and to the point, and the menus are straightforward. HomeRecord is the type of program that requires you to spend five minutes reading the short users' manual and five minutes installing the program. From there, you're off and running.

You can use any of 26 different terminal types with the program. If you don't use a display from one of the supported manufacturers, though, you're out of luck. The installation process is very straightforward.

You should be very sure of your figures when using this product, since once you enter an income or expense transaction, you cannot delete or modify it. On the other hand, it's difficult to enter illegal transactions with HomeRecord. The program checks all keyboard entries for errors as thoroughly as possible. Nor can you easily destroy data. If you want to

InfoWorld Report Card

HomeRecord



	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Performance	☐	☒	☐	☐
Documentation	☐	☐	☒	☐
Ease of Use	☐	☐	☒	☐
Error Handling	☐	☐	☒	☐

Summary: HomeRecord version 1.01 will keep track of your finances if they aren't too complex and even pass the information to a companion tax package. It certainly has limitations, including some omissions that are useful in planning your finances, but the package itself is basically of good quality.

Product details: List price, \$95. Available for 8080-, 8085- and Z80-based computers under the CP/M operating system, version 2.0 or later. Requires 64K RAM, two disk drives with a minimum of 158K storage each; printer. Published by Learning Source, Inc., Irvine, CA 92714; (714) 863-0414.

perform a potentially destructive action in which you must delete data, such as close out a particular month, HomeRecord asks you to confirm the action before you take the final step.

HomeRecord's documentation is a brief 15 pages, with no table of contents or index. This document is merely an introduction to the program. It includes a conceptual overview, information on installation and hints on how to get the maximum benefit from the product, partic-

ularly when used in conjunction with the companion HomeTax. You don't need much more — the on-line guidance is good enough to answer most of your questions.

The only aspect of this product that is not explained clearly in the documentation is the month-closing process. It is not obvious that you are restricted to working with one month at a time when entering income and expense data.

The installation instructions assume that you are using a system with two

floppy disks. It is not obvious how to adapt these instructions to a hard-disk system. (To do so you must split important HomeRecord files across the logical drives A and B.)

HomeRecord is a quality program. It has limitations, but can be useful if your finances aren't too complex. When used in conjunction with HomeTax (an excellent personal-tax package) it can help you effectively manage your personal finances. And the programs are tax deductible! ●

Review: I Am the C-64

BY PHILLIP ROBINSON
Contributor

If you are a beginner or novice who owns a Commodore 64 and find action on the screen easier to follow than on the page, I Am the C-64 is the program to show you the workings of your machine. At your own pace, in large and colorful graphics, it will demonstrate the capabilities of the machine and give many

explanations and a few more hints about harnessing those capabilities.

I am the C-64 is actually two programs. The Introductory Series consists of Volumes 1, 2 and 3 and is all on one diskette. These volumes are Overall Introduction to the C-64, Introduction to the Keyboard and Introduction to BASIC, respectively. Although the volumes can be run in any order you wish, the numbering is a good road map. The ideas become more

advanced in each consecutive volume.

All of the volumes are built around screens. Each screen presents a single scene or explanation and occupies the entire display. Some screens are altered during your use of the program, and you can't stop a screen once you have started to use it. Once a screen is played out, however, you can use a function key to return to the previous screen.

Volume 1 is a fun introduction to the sprites and sounds of the C-64. It is short and sweet.

Volume 2, the Introduction to the Keyboard, is excellent. A diagram on the screen highlights each key as its function and use is explained.

Volume 3, Introduction to BASIC, does

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